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JUNE 16, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary  
(Damascus, Syria)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT NIXON  
ON RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS  
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SYRIA

I join President Asad in expressing my pleasure that our two Governments are today reestablishing diplomatic relations. The American and Syrian peoples have a long history of friendly relations, and we in America are proud to count many persons of Syrian descent among our citizens. We look forward now to an expansion in contacts and cooperation between the United States and Syria. I have agreed with President Asad that Ambassadors will be named within two weeks.

In the many contacts which have taken place in recent weeks between the United States and Syrian Governments in the course of the negotiations on disengagement, each side has made clear its respect for the independence and sovereignty of the other. I want to reaffirm that relations between our two countries shall be based on this principle of international law. I also want to take this opportunity to express my admiration for the efforts President Asad and his colleagues have undertaken in the interests of peace. The United States will work closely with Syria for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 338 -- a peace which will bring a new era of growth and prosperity to the Middle East.

The renewed contacts between our governments and especially the intensive discussions leading to the agreement on the disengagement of Israeli and Syrian military forces have contributed markedly to a deeper understanding and improvement in the overall relationship between the United States and Syria. President Asad and I consider this agreement a first step towards a just and lasting peace in the area.

President Asad and I have agreed that our governments will review and develop further concrete ways in which the United States and Syria can work more closely together for their mutual benefit. A senior Syrian official will visit Washington in the near future to discuss specific plans to accomplish this goal. In the general context of strengthening our bilateral relations, I have affirmed that the United States is prepared to resume educational and cultural exchanges. President Asad extended an invitation to the United States to participate in the Damascus International Trade Fair next month, and I have accepted this invitation with pleasure on behalf of the United States.

I have extended an invitation to President Asad to visit the United States at a time to be agreed, and he has accepted this invitation.

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